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in the field of elementary nature study that children are interested in plants and animals only and that mechanical toys or facts of physics are to be debarred because physics is an advanced subject which ought to be taken up only in the higher schools. Experience shows in contradiction of this assumption that pupils in the elementary schools are very much interested in all sorts of mechanical toys. The use of flying machines certainly ought to have suggested itself long ago to everyone who is interested in the introduction and development of nature study. Boys read about these mechanical devices with the greatest enthusiasm even when the school gives them no encouragement to do so. That physics is a proper subject of elementary instruction is clearly demonstrated by experience with boys and Mr. Downing has done well to take advantage of this general interest and to put the material in form so that it can be used by teachers in elementary schools.

Musical talent.—The field in which psychological tests have been most successful in determining special talent is the field of music. Professor Seashore began experiments in his psychological laboratory a number of years ago to determine how far different individuals are able to distinguish pitches and how far they are able to produce with accuracy the different notes. He was led by his psychological experiments to devise a number of pieces of apparatus, notably one which makes it possible for a singer to see directly the degree to which he is accurate in striking a note which he is attempting to sound. With this visual control for the note that is being sung the observer is able to learn to produce notes more accurately than when the control is a purely auditory one.

The psychological experiments thus carried out in the laboratory led Professor Seashore to measure the ability of school children, and he devised a series of tests which brought out the fact that many school children are so far defective in their ability to discriminate notes that it is undesirable to spend any large amount of time or effort in trying to teach them music. On the other hand, there are a number of children who go undetected in the ordinary school but have a very high degree of natural ability that can be made the basis of a complete instruction in music.

Professor Seashore has now published in a single volume¹ the results of his different investigations and has supported these investigations by psychological discussions that include material other than that which he has accumulated in the course of his own tests. The various chapters of his new book deal with such matters as the recognition of intensity of sound, the recognition of pitch, time, and rhythm, and the ability to produce notes of pure quality. He has also given in substance the facts referred to in the first paragraphs of this review.

Perhaps the most interesting general chapter in the book is chapter xv in which are summarized the general principles of education to which Professor Seashore has been led in his examination of this special ability. This chapter is an emphatic protest against the uniform training of children in schools. It is a vigorous statement of the fact that there are very significant individual differ-

¹ CARL EMIL SEASHORE, *The Psychology of Musical Talent*. Beverley Educational Series, edited by W. W. Charters. Chicago: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1919. Pp. xvi+288.

ences in pupils and that instruction in the school, if it is to be successful, must take into account these individual differences and must create a motive for strenuous effort on the part of the child by proper adaptation of the school work to the child's tastes and abilities.

For the special teacher of music this psychology is indispensable. For the general teacher there is much wholesome doctrine with regard to individual differences and the development of a course of study which will influence general practice. For the student of psychology the book is an excellent summary of the psychological material bearing on this special topic.

Silent reading.—A series of readers designed to emphasize methods of instruction in silent reading has been prepared by Miss Bolenius. With this set of readers there comes a teachers' manual.¹ About two-thirds of the manual is devoted to a detailed discussion of lesson plans to be used in connection with the selections in the readers. These lesson plans will be very useful to teachers in guiding the reading exercises which are given in the book. Each exercise is explained by giving some account of the author of the selection and following this by a statement of the way in which the lesson should be read. For example, the method of teaching Longfellow's poem "Rain in Summer" is described as follows:

"The teacher should try to bring out the pictures in the various stanzas. Note the adjectives applied to rain—*beautiful, welcome, incessant, showery*. In each stanza note the words that boldly paint the picture."

"Read slowly or fast to bring out the spirit of the rainfall. For instance, the second stanza pictures a fast downpour; the third, on the other hand, is slow, so that the sick man can drink in the cooling breath of the rain. The last three stanzas are more easily grasped if they are read rapidly, so that the thought-groups are given in their entirety. Incidentally these paragraphs furnish excellent practice in breath control."

"The pupils may listen with eyes closed, so as to concentrate upon building complete pictures—things seen, odors, sounds. Stimulating discussion may be aroused by urging the children to compare their pictures. Some little youngster may even be able to give you a picture for the last stanza—angels bearing the dead aloft to heaven."

"There are literal pictures in the first seven stanzas and fancies of the poet in the last three. Naturally, the poetic fancies are the more difficult. Be satisfied if the class as a whole get the literal pictures. If the last stanzas are well read, some of the mystery of the rain will sink in." [Page 157.]

In the introductory third of the book Miss Bolenius has discussed at length the general principles on which the readers are based. She has given a table, for example, showing how many words children ought to be able to read in a minute in the different grades and has suggested charts and other methods of bringing up the efficiency of the different classes. She has given a diagram showing how oral reading should be very rapidly diminished from the third grade on and its place

¹ EMMA MILLER BOLENIUS, *The Boys' and Girls' Readers: Teachers' Manual*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919. Pp. xlix+229. \$0.80.